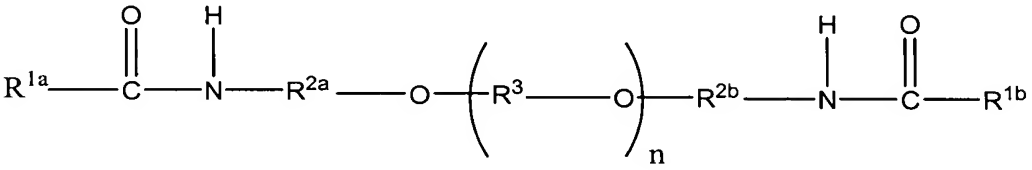
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A method for reinforcing the water retaining ability of the horny layer or a skin barrier function and ~~preventing or~~ remedying skin roughness, which comprises applying, to the skin, a composition comprising an effective amount of a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):

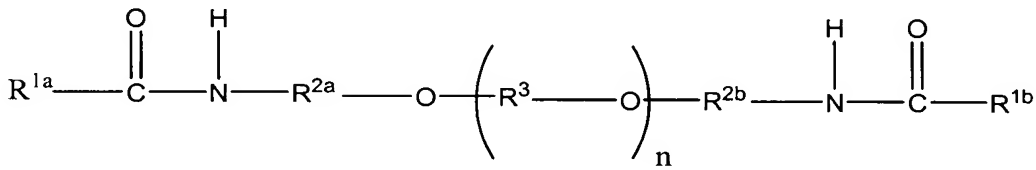


(1)

(wherein, R^{1a} and R^{1b} are the same or different and each represents a C_{1-23} hydrocarbon group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group, R^3s are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{2-6} hydrocarbon group and n stands for 1 to 100).

Claim 8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (previously presented): A method for remedying excessive hair dryness or improving touch feel of the hair, which comprises applying, to the hair, a composition comprising an effective amount of a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):



(1)

(wherein, R^{1a} and R^{1b} are the same or different and each represents a C_{1-23} hydrocarbon group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{1-6} hydrocarbon group, R^3s are the same or different and each represents a divalent C_{2-6} hydrocarbon group and n stands for 1 to 100).

Claims 10-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein said treating reinforces a water retaining ability of the horny layer.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein said treating reinforces a skin barrier function.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein said composition further comprises an intracellular lipid component of the horny layer.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method of claim 17, wherein said intracellular lipid component of the horny layer is at least one member selected from the group consisting of ceramides, pseudoceramids, sphingoglycolipids, sphingophospholipids, sphingosines and derivatives thereof, sphinganines and derivatives thereof, higher fatty acids and cholesterols and derivatives thereof.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein said composition is a cosmetic composition.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein said diamide is present in said composition, in an amount of 0.001 to 50 wt. %.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein said composition further comprises an oily base.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The method of claim 21, wherein said oily base is at least one member selected from the group consisting of vegetable oils, animal oils, synthetic oils, fatty acids, natural glycerides and synthetic glycerides.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The method of claim 9, wherein said composition is a shampoo which comprises 0.001 to 5 wt. % of said diamide.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method of claim 23, further comprising an anionic surfactant.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of claim 24, wherein said anionic surfactant is present in an amount of 5 to 30 wt.%.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The method of claim 9, wherein said composition comprises 0.1 to 20 wt. % of said diamide.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method of claim 26, further comprising at least one surfactant selected from the group consisting of cationic surfactant and non-ionic surfactant.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The method of claim 27, wherein said surfactant is present in an amount of 0.1 to 50 wt.%.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The method of claim 9, wherein said composition comprises 0.01 to 5 wt.% of said diamide.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The method of claim 29, wherein said composition further comprises a nonionic surfactant.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The method of claim 30, wherein said nonionic surfactant is present in an amount of 0.01 to 20 wt.%.